

CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention

January 18, 2007

To: Commissioners

From: Lynn Sharpe-Underwood
Executive Director

Action Item-2

Recommended Action: Have the Executive Director develop a protocol for the Commission members to implement and provide research to the Commission on services to victims of gang violence.

Background

Many cities have a gang violence response team. Los Angeles since 1997 has had a Yellow Tape Brigade which is headed by Communities In Schools' Blink Rodriquez. (see attachment A). Volunteers and appropriate staff show up at the scene of the violence to work with families and attempt to quell any retaliation plans.

Members of the Commission have indicated they would like to be involved in order to support victims of gang violence. Helping these families and individuals access resources would be positive first step. Research on county-wide efforts and information would be helpful in making recommendations in the strategic plan.

ATTACHMENT A

Blinky Rodriquez

A World Champion in martial arts and kickboxing, CIS Executive Director, William "Blinky" Rodriguez has a long history of working with youth. The work became very personal in 1990 when Blinky's own family fell victim to gang violence. Sonny, his 16-year old son was killed in that inspired Blinky to dedicate his life to ending gang violence. Despite intense anger, hurt and grief, Blinky and his wife, Lilly, had the courage to meet the three killers face to face in the courtroom, not for retribution, but to forgive them.

The news of the forgiveness spread among the gangs, and when Blinky called for the gangs to meet with him, they met and listened. Blinky negotiated a truce, called the Valley Unity Peace Treaty, which was signed by over 75 gangs with over 1,000 members. The treaty successfully reduced gang-related deaths in the following year in Los Angeles from 52 to 2. This peace treaty project led to CIS San Fernando Valley, a non-profit organization formed in 1994.

The peacekeeping efforts of CIS were the subject of a study, funded by the California State Legislature under AB 2650. Conducted by Cal State University at Northridge, it found the peace treaty to be effective in demonstrating peacekeeping strategies and recommended that it be replicated statewide. CIS has been named the "model" program for gang intervention by the State of California, LA County and the City of L.A. Since 1997, individuals, corporations, foundations and public entities have invested millions of dollars in the work of CIS of the San Fernando Valley and Greater Los Angeles.